

*Supports Investments in Veterans Health Care & Benefits, Military Construction Projects*  
July 28, 2010

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) announced he had secured \$2,000,000 for the New Orleans Naval Air Station (NAS) Joint Reserve Base located in Belle Chasse. This investment will be used to replace the 24-hour alert facility that houses military aircraft at the station. The current temporary buildings are inadequate for long-term alert readiness and support. The funding will be included in the FY 2011 Military Construction/Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill (H.R. 5822) that passed the House of Representatives tonight.

**“The Naval Air Station in Belle Chasse provides round-the-clock aerial support for military operations in the region, and I am proud to secure this funding to upgrade their facilities,”** said Rep. Melancon. **“This bill will also keep our promises to the thousands of Louisiana veterans who have bravely served our country. These investments will help deliver the quality benefits our veterans have earned more efficiently and at more convenient locations, such as the newly-opened VA clinic in Franklin.”**

This appropriations bill increases investments in the federal Department of Veterans Affairs, which provides medical care to over 6 million veterans, including more than 439,000 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. This legislation will enable the VA to hire 4,000 new permanent claims processors – a 25 percent increase -- to serve the 1 million veterans waiting for their disability claims to be processed.

In March, a new veterans' outpatient clinic opened in Franklin, LA. This clinic was one of the 145 new community-based veterans outpatient clinics that have been opened since January 2007, thanks to the 70 percent increase in funding for veterans' health care and benefits Congressman Melancon has voted for in the past four years. These investments have also supported hiring over 10,000 new claims processors, 3,389 new doctors and 14,316 new nurses, and opening 92 new veterans' centers.

[Click here](#) to view a complete summary of the FY 2011 Military Construction/Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill.

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